

## Tokyo Pulse | July 2025 vol.1

### Tokyo Sugoi! - Episode 9 by Steve Gillick

#### Tokyo Insider Tips, Tricks, and Food for Thought!

Two Japanese phrases seem to be eating away at each other.

*Harahachibunme* means "eat until your belly is 80% full". This is sage advice for foodies who find Japanese food irresistible.

But then there is the phrase *Kuchisabishii*, which means you are not hungry, but you eat because "your mouth is lonely".



A steaming Beef dumpling in Higashi-Ginza

Tokyo is known internationally for the variety, quality, and taste of its gastronomy. So, it's a great challenge to practice *harahachibunme* and equally challenging to avoid *kuchisabishii*. Just walk along the main street in Higashi-Ginza and pass by the shops selling onigiri, fresh baked goods, frozen melon buns, fragrant steamed beef dumplings, and seafood. It's pretty hard to resist munching even when you're not particularly hungry.

But it's good to know that when you have an appetite, there are well over 100,000 Tokyo restaurants from which to choose. While the hotel concierge can recommend places to dine, locals often check [Tabelog.com](https://tabelog.com) to review restaurant ratings. There is also the queue method. If there's a lineup outside a restaurant, the food is likely very special. When we go to Tempura Nakayama in Ningyocho for a lunch of delicious black tendon, we arrive a few minutes before the 11:00 a.m. opening. A few minutes later, the line may be 20-30 minutes long.



The amazing Black Tendon at Tempura Nakayama

For those looking for a break from eating in restaurants, there are two excellent choices. For a casual lunch or dinner, visit a "konbini" or convenience store (such as 7-11, Lawson, or Family Mart). They offer fresh, prepared meals that you can take home and either eat cold or reheat in a microwave. They also sell a variety of drinks (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), desserts, soups, snacks, and sandwiches. And for those who, for some reason, require underwear, socks, or a T-shirt, some konbini sell these items too!

Another meal suggestion is to visit one of Tokyo's department stores, such as Isetan, Tokyu, Mitsukoshi, or Matsuya. Groceries and prepared foods are sold on the basement level.

If you shop after 5:00 or 6:00 p.m., the food is usually discounted. For at least one meal, we buy sashimi, sushi, tempura vegetables, pastries, and a bottle of Sake and head back to the hotel for a relaxing evening.

For those interested in learning more about Sake, many department stores offer samples.

Additionally, Sake bars (for example, Shinshu Osake Mura or Tachinomi Kuri in Shimbashi near the Metro Station) will prepare samples for guests.

If you love one or two of the selections, you can order a regular-size drink. Ask the bartender to write down the name of the Sake for future reference.



Mitsukoshi Department Store in Ginza



Sampling Sake in a Sake Bar



Shibuya Metro Station

Subway stations such as Shimbashi and the futuristic Shibuya station are part of the 286 neighbourhood subway stations that service the city of Tokyo. The best times to take the subway are before the 7:00 a.m. rush hour begins or after 9:30 a.m., and then again before the 5:00 p.m. rush hour begins or after 7:30 p.m. It's much less crowded, and you may even get a seat. If you plan to travel extensively, consider purchasing a Day Pass, which is valid on subways and buses. It may be more economical than



paying for each individual journey you take.

Keep in mind that every Metro station has coin lockers and washrooms. Many station attendants speak English.



The Meiji Jingu Shrine, early morning

Some of Tokyo's popular sites and attractions can become quite congested during the day. So, for example, if you can visit Sensoji Temple in Asakusa in the early morning or in the evening, it is much (much) less crowded, and you can still enjoy the whole experience. The same holds true for visits to the Meiji Jingu Shrine (open sunrise to sunset) and the Tokyo Skytree (open 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.)

Tokyo is a fantastic city, offering visitors a wealth of attractions. Hopefully, these few tips and tricks (and food for thought) will help to make the experience even more meaningful and enjoyable.

\*All photos are taken by Steve Gillick, *Talking Travel*



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**Steve Gillick** loves to travel and loves to talk to people who love to talk about travel. He's been at it since 1967 when he visited nine European destinations on a school trip. Steve has had over 370 articles published in consumer and travel trade publications. To date he has explored 85 countries and over 770 destinations. He recently returned from his 22nd trip to Japan. Steve is the author of *A Symphony of Camels: Travel Adventures & Conversations Around the World*, available on Amazon.com

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